

**MICHAŁ GAJLEWICZ**

*Argumentation and Persuasion Techniques in Advertising*

**KEY WORDS**

persuasion technique, argumentation, advertising, effectiveness, content analysis

**ABSTRACT**

Persuasion techniques and argumentation are aimed at convincing people. While arguments are of a linguistic and logical nature, persuasion techniques make use of more diversified means of expression. It is where the question about the relationship between them arises. Both persuasion techniques and arguments are used in advertising. The article presents the results of a quantitative content analysis of the advertisements that appeared in the following newspapers: "Gazeta Wyborcza", "Rzeczpospolita" and "Dziennik Gazeta Prawna" in the selected two months of 2007 and 2011. The analysis was applied to determine which techniques and arguments are used in commercial advertising and whether they are used together or separately.

Various persuasion measures aimed at convincing people to accept certain views are used in many areas of life. Generally, their further objective is exerting influence on behaviour. Advertising is undoubtedly one of such areas. What is crucial to advertising and related fields is the effectiveness of impact and, thereby, determining measures or instruments that can increase efficiency. Such measures include, among others, persuasion techniques<sup>1</sup>.

From both the theoretical and practical point of view, it was essential to consider also other means of persuasion in the course of gathering and arranging materials related to persuasion techniques. In addition to persuasion techniques, two other groups of such means can be distinguished: Linguistic and argumentative (mainly eristic). While the latter has a long history of evolution and application, numbering many hundreds of years and a rich literature, persuasion techniques have been identified and developed for only a few tens of years; therefore, publications which would discuss them in a more systematic manner are still

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<sup>1</sup> The size of this article does not allow for a broader discussion of what persuasion techniques are. Thus, I encourage all the interested to refer to the following publication: M. Gajlewicz, *Techniki perswazyjne. Podstawy*, Warszawa 2009.

rare.

When attempting to present a classification, the question of mutual relations between these two groups of measures used to increase the effectiveness of impact must be settled first. There would be no problem if:

- One set of measures was contained in the other, i.e. as its subgroup, or
- One group could completely replace the other, i.e. its separation would be unnecessary then.

However, there is a difficulty – at least as far as the relations between persuasion techniques and the other two groups of measures are concerned. Although some persuasion techniques refer to linguistic and argumentative means, others – and they constitute a majority – cannot be classified into these groups, first of all, due to the fact that their specificity lies elsewhere. Without raising broader considerations, several examples of aspects<sup>2</sup>, on which the activity of certain persuasion techniques is based, can be mentioned here. They include, *inter alia*: the way of constructing messages, context in which they are used (media or wider social message), proximity to other messages (in time or space) or the manner of reaching recipients.

The case is further complicated since, when attempting at classifying persuasion techniques, in addition to the already mentioned linguistic and argumentative means, some other related measures can as well be distinguished, e.g. motives<sup>3</sup> being of a more general nature than techniques. Nevertheless, this issue requires a completely separate explanation and, thus, I only indicate it.

There is therefore a need to investigate relations between different measures, whose common feature is that they may contribute – in varying degrees – to achieving a better persuasion effect. Exploring the relationship between them may be of both theoretical and practical importance. It seems more reasonable to first examine the relationship between persuasion techniques and arguments, mainly due to the fact that argumentation is largely used for persuasion purposes, i.e. convincing people about certain ideas<sup>4</sup>. Meanwhile, purposes of the use of linguistic means are more diverse and their scope ranges from artistic through scientific to phatic communication.

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<sup>2</sup> They could be otherwise called basics of the functioning of various techniques.

<sup>3</sup> For now, it is only a working name of this group of measures as the very idea is still being analysed and developed.

<sup>4</sup> It can also be used for educational purposes, among other things, to facilitate understanding of certain ideas or to increase the attractiveness of a particular message or reasoning. For this purpose, in teaching may be used, e.g. arguments *a simili* or *a contrario*. However, such manner of using the argumentation process or individual arguments does not prevail.

Among other things, this is a decisive reason<sup>5</sup> why the research on the relationship between persuasion techniques and arguments has been undertaken. It was vital to gain knowledge based on empirical studies which, in this case, involved content analysis of a quantitative nature.

At the beginning, it was stipulated that the research did not analyse the whole process of argumentation. It aimed only at determining what arguments are used in commercial advertising. The problem defined in this manner was then narrowed down to two aspects.

Firstly, the analysis sought to capture the proportion between the application of factual arguments (referring to the merits, the heart of the matter) and non-factual arguments (not pertaining to the merits, the heart of the matter). In other words, the research was aimed at finding out whether or not commercial advertising mentions these features of a product or service that are associated with their use. It is widely known that advertising avoids merit-based statements and often evades – for various reasons – raising the main subject, i.e. a product or service and its features and utility. Investigating advertising messages from this point of view is an interesting task for at least several reasons, for instance, the ethical aspect of the issue.

Secondly, the analysis was aimed at determining what arguments and in what proportions are used in advertising messages. It concerned individual arguments, known for their names (mostly Latin), whose number reaches tens. It was interesting to examine the extent to which content-related arguments – that, after all, were extracted primarily from the realm of public, especially political, life – are used within the sphere of commercial advertising. To put it differently, it would be worthwhile to inquire whether and how the discussed polemical tricks support another subject-area.

The discussion on arguments should begin with a reservation that the analysis of yet another aspect has not been taken into consideration. Namely, whether and, if yes, to what extent one- and two-sided arguments are applied since the general assumption is that advertising uses only one-sided arguments. It is difficult to expect that advertising messages will include arguments both for and against the purchase and use of the product. In most situations, it would be marketing suicide. If, among the analysed materials, an example of the use of two-sided arguments in commercial advertising was found, it would be, of course, discussed in the first place as an exception.

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<sup>5</sup> Moreover, it needs to be said that part of the study was conducted under a research project for the year 2010 whose budget was very limited. Hence, thematic restrictions as well as these related to the scope of the research are discernible.

It should also be mentioned that there is a rather significant difference between the use of persuasion in the sphere of public life and in commercial advertising. Within the realm of politics, it is common to try and convince people who have fixed opinions on a given topic (candidate, party, political options, etc.) to adopt views not necessarily compatible with those already held. Therefore, if not rejection, then at least resistance to attempts at convincing about the opposing options should be expected. However, negative attitudes towards the proclaimed idea are unlikely to be observed in advertising – it is usually difficult to find an example of such a group of people who do not like washing machines as hardware and react adversely to any conversation concerning it. With regard to politics, and especially politicians, such a phenomenon can be found everywhere. In advertising, in turn, merely the following can be observed: indifference to the product or industry (women – indifferent to DIY tools or men – to cosmetics), or reluctance (though in relation to advertising as such, due to its ubiquity and importunity or, in some cases, even primitivism) in terms of its content.

The broad understanding of the term ‘advertising’ is widespread nowadays and, thereby causes a certain terminological difficulty. Three spheres of advertising application are distinguished: commercial, political and social. Each of them has an explicitly marked specificity as they have different goals to achieve, which entails the use of differing measures as well<sup>6</sup>. Obviously, it has important implications for the use of both arguments and persuasion techniques. For this reason and because of few possibilities of realisation, the analysis was limited only to commercial advertising.

Persuasion techniques that are used in advertising were subject to analysis. Simultaneously, it should be added that their existence in this area is obvious. At this point, it is worth responding to the belief, at times expressed, that any advertising effect, especially the message, must bear the characteristics of a persuasion technique. It is an incorrect conviction since there are actions of an advertising nature which do not apply any persuasion techniques. In fact, techniques are used as measures aimed at increasing efficiency. The situation and specificity of a product or industry, or mentality (e.g. the system of values, likes and dislikes of the advertisement recipients) do not always create the possibility of using such measures. The analysis is limited to only determine whether any persuasion technique have been applied and, if so, then which.

Additionally, the analysis takes into account basic features of messages which enable a

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<sup>6</sup> In the interwar period and for some time after the war in democratic countries, advertising used for purposes other than commercial was defined as propaganda. At the same time however, in a significant number of cases, such use of the term did not contain any pejorative overtones. For instance, encouraging peasants to grow certain types of plants was called propaganda.

general characterisation of the analysed messages (size, industry, etc.). These features will be, however, briefly discussed during the presentation of the results.

### **Analysis**

The analysis related only to the press. Three nationwide dailies: “Gazeta Wyborcza”, „Rzeczpospolita” and „Dziennik Gazeta Prawna” were analysed. The idea behind the selection of titles was to choose, on the one hand, titles having a large readership across the country (being also more important on the Polish press market), on the other hand – those of a varied socio-political orientation. The analysis covered advertising messages which were published in these titles in two time spans: October 2007 and May 2011. The time interval was necessary to determine whether and to what extent the nature of advertising messages in the press is stable as far as certain attributes are concerned<sup>7</sup>. The total number of 20 issues of these dailies was chosen; 9 of which were of 2007, and 11 – of 2011. The total number of 247 press advertisements was published in selected titles; 129 of which were of 2007, and 118 – of 2011. Thus, it can be said that roughly about a half of both the issues of newspapers as well as messages came from those two years. All advertisements were subjected to a quantitative analysis.

The issue of sample selection for this type of analysis requires at least a brief comment. The main objective was to determine the ratio between the application of arguments on the one hand and persuasion techniques on the other. The aim of such selection was to obtain a sample which has, to some degree, the value of representativeness. This choice was very similar to the one practised in the design of the so-called arranged (composed) week, which is a particular variant of systematic sampling. However, the number of units analysed was not too extensive; all the more that the large time interval would require relating each of the examined halves of the material to the season of the year, from which it came. In principle, there is no representativeness in relation to a month. Further-reaching conclusions concerning representativeness of the selected material can be drawn only by comparing the results obtained in the two years analysed. Of course, it should be remembered as well that the advertising market during nearly three and a half years also changed. However, the comparison of basic parameters (for instance, proportion of advertised sectors, type of the message content, etc.) indicates a relatively high similarity of advertising messages

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<sup>7</sup> This aspect will not be discussed in greater detail in this paper; however, due to other research intentions, it is essential.

published in the period discussed, what lays the foundations to draw bolder conclusions about the entirety of analysed messages contained in the three selected newspapers<sup>8</sup>.

Still, another aspect of the analysis seems to pose a great difficulty. This problem lies in the fact that advertising messages are recursively repeated in the course of an advertising campaign as it is one of the ways to increase both noticeability and rememberability of not only the main idea, but also various other elements included in the message, e.g. the company logo, advantages of the product or service, etc. This means that the same message can be put to the test several times. It is even inevitable in the case of a larger sample. A similar problem may occur in analysing media materials – though to a much lesser extent – for instance, when we determine what programme units are aired on television. Then, movies or episodes of TV series can be counted as many times as they are broadcast. In the case of advertising, it is a profound problem. This circumstance forces us to make a choice since it conditions what kind of conclusions we wish to draw. Without going further into extensive considerations, the differences can be summarised as follows:

- The first variant. It eliminates all identical, repetitive messages leaving only one. Only distinct advertising messages are summed up. As a result, the analysis is of a more typological character and involves estimating the variety of advertisements presented, understood as separate works. When confronted with the data on reception, this information has lesser applicability.
- The second variant. All the instances of a given work are treated as separate acts of communication. This approach allows us to determine which means having an advertising effect and with what intensity (how many times) are provided by the media. These data offer a greater possibility of confrontation with the data on reception and enable to draw broader conclusions.

In fact, a combination of both variants would be the best solution. For the purpose of this analysis, I chose the second option since it was the most important to establish what means having a persuasion impact are delivered by the press and what their number is.

### **Results of the analysis**

Practically the same number of issues of each title (with one exception) was selected for the analysis. However, the number of messages published in them is significantly different. Chart

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<sup>8</sup> The framework of this article does not allow us to quote certain comparisons since it would mean departing from the main subject.

1 presents the proportions received.

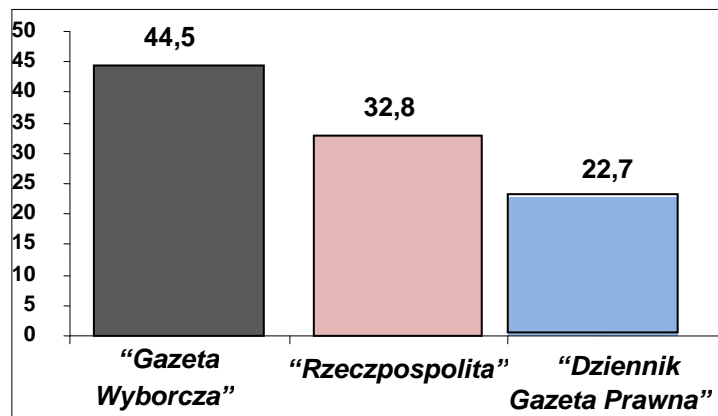


Chart 1. Number of advertisements in the analysed titles (in percentages).

To put it simply, the proportion can be determined as follows: "Gazeta Wyborcza" published slightly less than a half of all advertisements, "Rzeczpospolita" contained less than a third of all advertisements and "Dziennik Gazeta Prawna" published the least advertisements – less than one fourth. In a sense, it is a measure of the potential of these newspapers as the advertising media.

The size of published advertisements was the first aspect analysed. In contrast to materials of a journalistic nature<sup>9</sup>, advertising is dominated by large format advertisements (Chart 2).

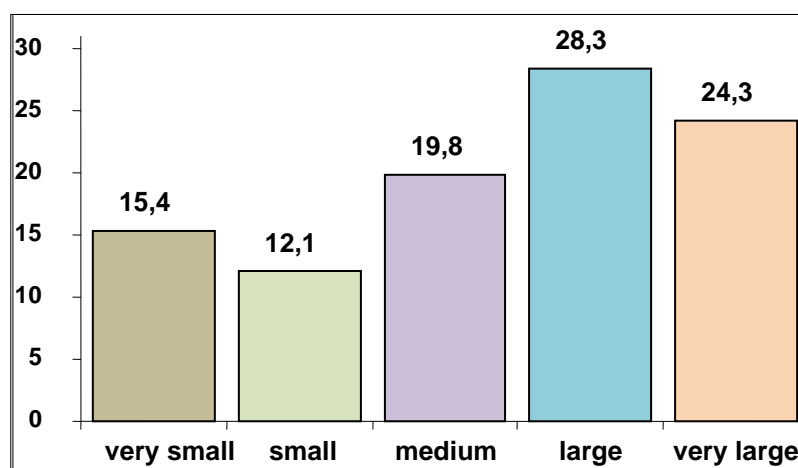


Chart 2. Size of the analysed advertising messages (in percentages).

<sup>9</sup> It is confirmed by the analysis of various types of journalistic material in the press that I conducted earlier (among others, in *Gazeta Wyborcza* and *Rzeczpospolita*).

Large and very large advertisements constitute more than a half of the studied messages; together with the third biggest group – advertisements of an medium size, they make up nearly 3/4 of the analysed sample. Such data may indicate that broadcasters strive to make the advertising influence more effective since the large size of a message, especially in a daily, increases the chance of noticing it. Additionally, it provides better opportunities to shape the message.

The proportions of advertised industries are interesting. Two of them undoubtedly dominate – automotive industry as well as banking and insurance services. Together they account for almost a half of all advertisements; automotive advertising constitutes over one-fourth of advertisements while banking and insurance services – more than one-fifth. Together with the subsequent, much more modestly represented category, i.e. culture and art, the first three sectors make up nearly three-fifths of all advertisements. It means a high concentration. These proportions definitely impinge upon the nature of advertising messages as well as arguments and persuasion techniques used. Chart 3 presents these proportions in relation to all the materials coming from both years.

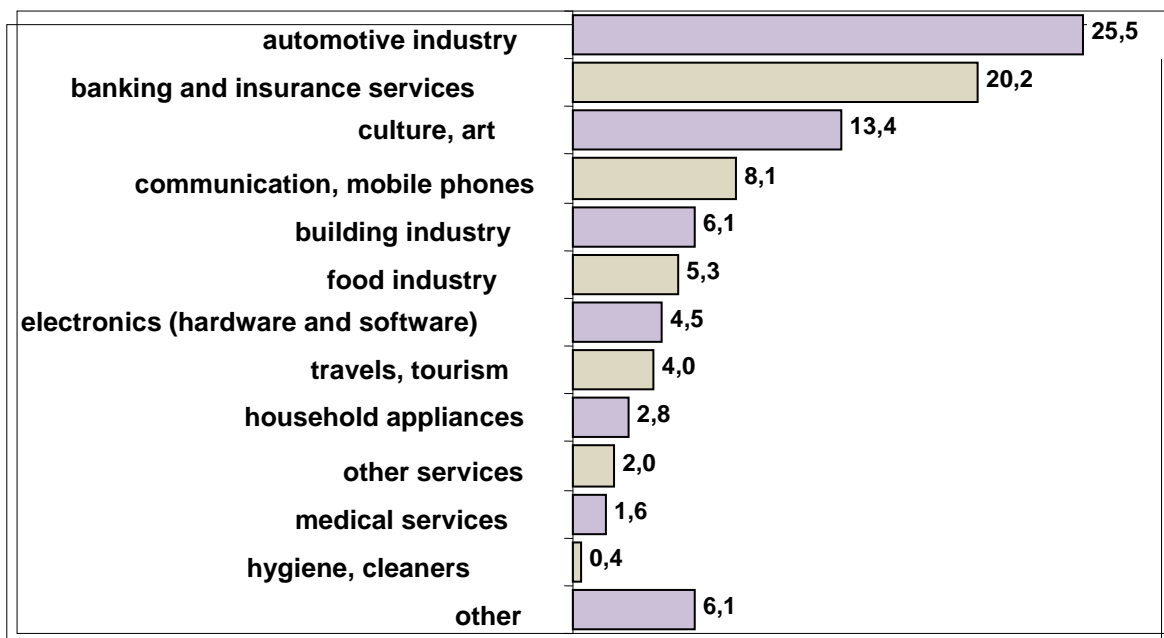


Chart 3. Advertised sectors (in percentages)

Yet, the comparison of the data of 2007 and 2011 proves that rather significant changes occurred as far as the advertised industries are concerned. They pertain primarily to the first three sectors. Estimates carried out for each year separately show that: 1) the share of



the automotive industry decreased approximately three times (from 36.4 to 13.6 per cent), the share of the building industry declined as well (from 9.3 to 2.5 per cent); and 2) the share of the banking and insurance sector increased almost twice (from 14.7 to 26.3 per cent), the same applies to art and culture (from 9.3 to 17.8 per cent). Chart 3 contains different figures as they cover the total number estimated for the two analysed years.

The content of the message was another examined parameter. Two items prevail here: logo (brand or trademark) and image of the offer (in the case when the specificity of the product or service enabled to make the visualisation of the offer). The percentage data presented in Chart 4 do not add up to a hundred because some messages might contain more than one element (for example, a logo and a group of people). The comparison of the data for the analysed years has not revealed any significant discrepancies.

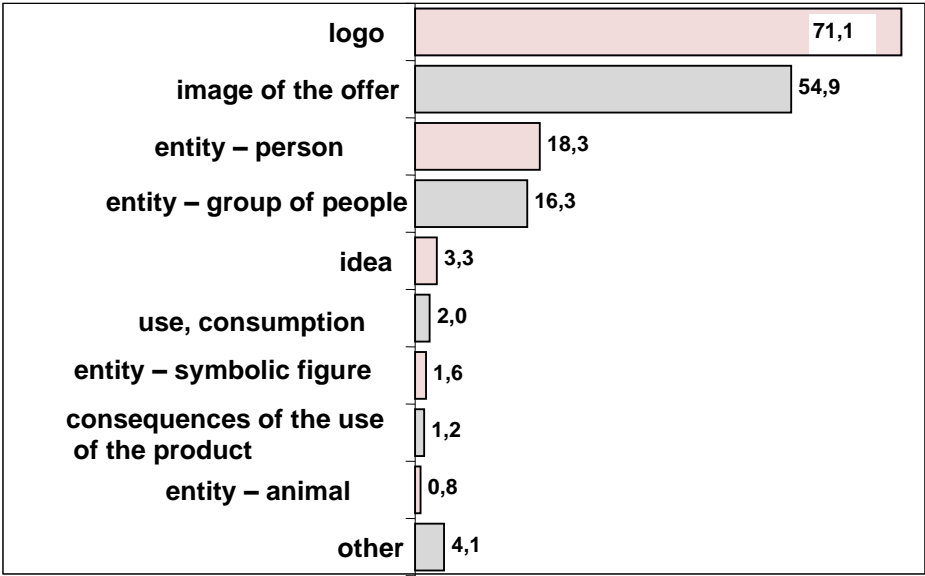


Chart 4. Content of an advertising message (in percentages)

These proportions indicate that a significant part of the messages represent a traditional, verified by time, way of the offer visualisation. Simultaneously, paradoxically, it goes hand in hand with the domination of the persuasion technique most frequently used here; namely, the unusual message in which surprise, unconventional approach to the problem or even deliberate shocking play an important role.

Subsequently, the analysis of the type of the message was carried out, i.e. by what means it was created. Chart 5 presents the proportions (percentages do not add up to a

hundred because messages could contain more elements than one).

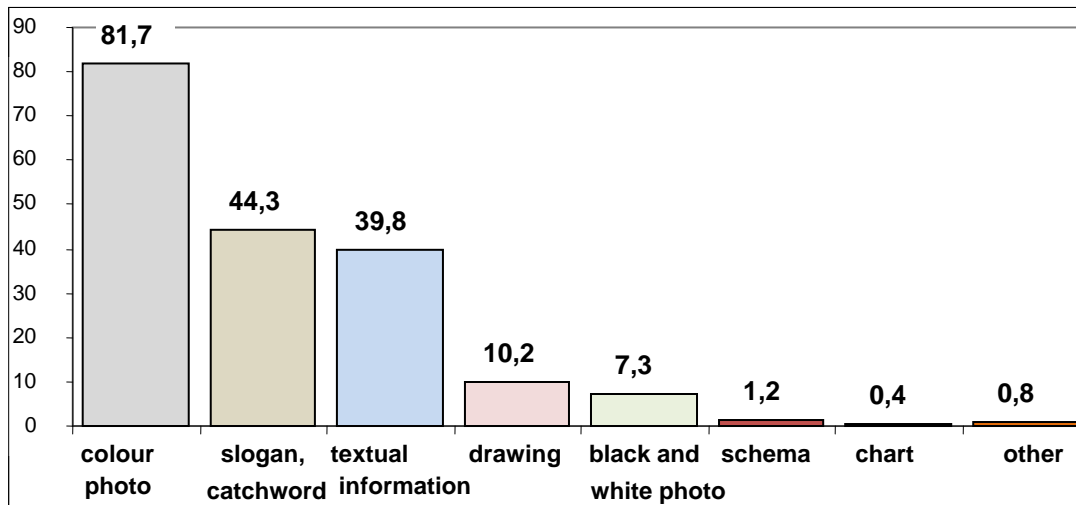


Chart 5. Type of an advertising message (in percentages)

This aspect of advertising messages is characterised by the dominance of the first category and a significant supremacy of the following two over others. The predominance of colour photography is not surprising – we live in the civilisation of pictures which are not drawn, but photographed and filmed. Still, what draws attention is the high number of words in messages as both the slogan and textual information use this tool. Undoubtedly, it is influenced by the specificity of industries, e.g. the image alone is not sufficient to advertise the offer of banking and financial services. In fact, in 2011, when compared to 2007, the largest increase in the number of messages could be observed, on the one hand, within the sector of banking and financial services, on the other hand – in the number of those containing textual information.

Advertising, by its very nature, exerts a persuasive impact. However, the message itself – even though it aims at influencing people’s opinions or behaviour – does not necessarily have to contain clearly distinguished elements of a persuasive nature. Furthermore, an advertising message, in principle, includes both information and persuasion. Currently, messages of a purely informational or persuasive character are rather rare. Therefore, from the point of view of the analysis, it was more reasonable to classify messages on the basis of the fact which of these aspects prevails. The proportions are shown in Chart 6.

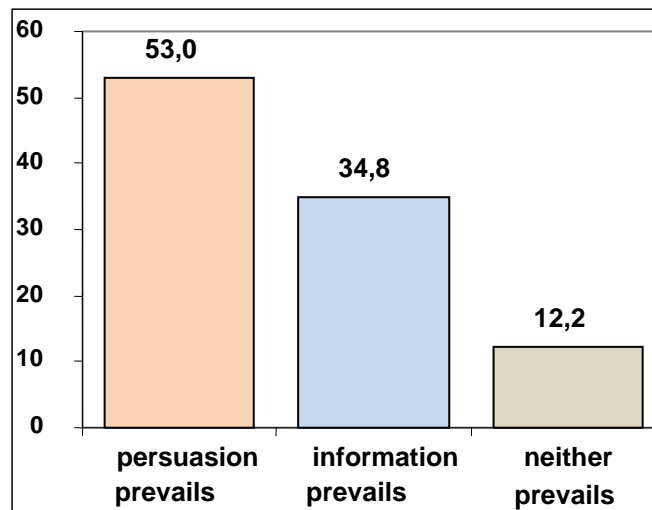


Chart 6. Persuasionness of the message (in percentages)

The situation is clear: persuasion prevailed in more than a half of the analysed advertisements, and information – in more than one-third of them. The significant contribution of informativeness to the message should be assessed rather positively, especially in the light of the fact that, for decades, the advertising industry has been defending itself against all kinds of allegations, claiming that advertising also plays an important informative function. However, the issue what type of information it is remains open.

Since persuasion prevailed, it was necessary to further determine whether and how frequently persuasion techniques were used as specific measures aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the impact. The results obtained are illustrated in Chart 7.

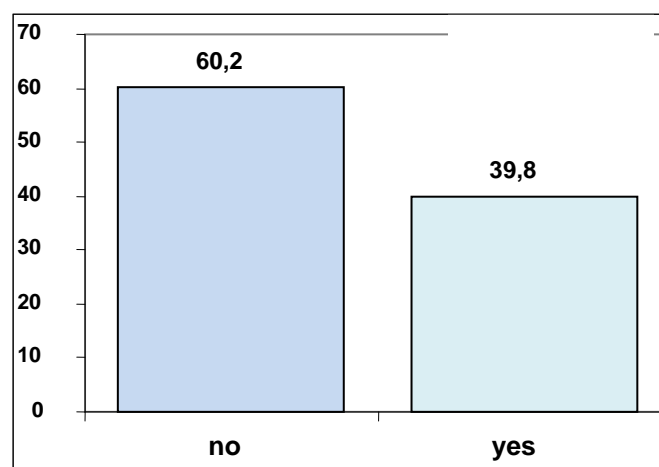


Chart 7. Use of persuasion techniques (in percentages)

Surprisingly, none persuasion techniques were applied to as many as three-fifths of the total number of advertisements in a situation when the persuasion aspect predominates. The answer is simple – even if the message is persuasion, they do not need to be applied. Techniques of persuasion are, saying colloquially, a sort of a ‘booster’ or stimulant used additionally – just like the streamlined car body does not belong to the group of qualities necessary to define vehicles of a given type.

Nevertheless, persuasion techniques were used in 2/5 of advertising messages. It is therefore worth investigating which techniques were applied and in what proportions. Chart 8 presents the results. When interpreting these data, it should be remembered that percentages do not add up to a hundred because more than one technique was used in some messages.

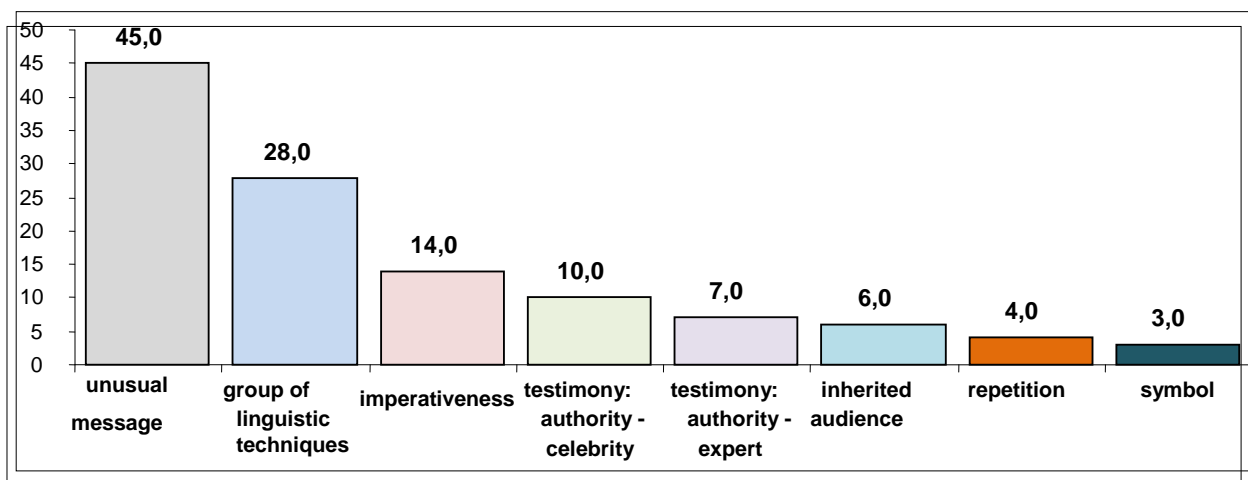


Chart 8. Persuasion techniques applied (in percentages)

The use of persuasion techniques also indicates a high concentration; the unusual message constitutes less than a half, and the second most frequent is the group of linguistic techniques making up over one-fourth. Only these two techniques cover nearly 3/4 of all instances of the use of persuasion techniques. In 2011, when compared to 2007, both of these techniques were used more often. This reflects, above all, that the nature of the used persuasion means was more determined, if not aggressive. Obviously, it applies to the greatest extent to the unusual message.

Nonetheless, not all persuasion techniques were applied in the analysed period and in the selected titles. Out of the 25 distinguishable persuasion techniques<sup>10</sup>, only eight were used. The observation of the practice in this area, together with the data obtained in the course of

<sup>10</sup> Interested readers may refer to various publications on the means and techniques of persuasion, including the above-mentioned book: M. Gajlewicz, *Techniki...*

the analysis, enables to set forth three hypotheses concerning the causes of this state of affairs. They can be formulated as follows:

- some techniques are more easily applicable (for instance, the unusual message is supported primarily by technical capabilities, such as easiness in transforming the image and obtaining unusual effects);
- certain techniques may be perceived as more effective by authors and sponsors, and market practice can confirm it;
- creators may have an incomplete knowledge about the existing, and eligible for application, techniques of persuasion – mostly, they can only use what they know. Moreover, the imitation of the already used ideas can also play a particular role here.

At this point, it is worth quoting examples of at least two most common techniques used in the analysed titles. However, their brief definitions must be cited first.

Table 1. Definitions of the two prevailing techniques

Unusual message	Group of linguistic techniques
Such preparation, modification or manner of providing a persuasion message that it is clearly distinguishable from among other messages. It aims primarily at increasing, first of all, noticeability and secondly, possibly rememberability as well. When creating an advertisement using this technique, ingenuity, invention and originality are crucial.	Using a variety of linguistic means to increase the attractiveness of a message or the strength of argumentation. For this purpose, the following may be used: carefully selected vocabulary (of both the mother tongue and foreign languages), possibilities offered by syntax, use of slang, jargon, wordplay, etc.

Two examples placed side by side are presented below. The unusual message is applied to the offer advertisement of the chain stores RTV EURO AGD (Illustration 1), where an unusual visual literalism of the slogan *we are sawing prices* is used. This message also has features of the linguistic technique. The phrase *a favourable turn*, illustrated by the platform resembling a theatrical movable rotary stage, draws our attention to the second example – the advertisement of Bank Millennium (Illustration 2) – representing the group of linguistic techniques. This message also has qualities of the unusual message. These examples prove that more than one persuasion techniques can be used in a single advertising message.



III. 1. Advertisement of RTV EURO AGD

III. 2. Advertisement of Bank Millennium

Argumentation was the next analysed aspect. Firstly, it was necessary to determine whether any argumentation whatsoever was used, i.e. any attempts to convince to purchase offered products or services. The lack of argumentation in messages lies in the fact that only information is given that the product or service exists. Still, the message does not contain information about the advantages of the product or the benefits of its purchase. Chart 9 presents the proportions received.

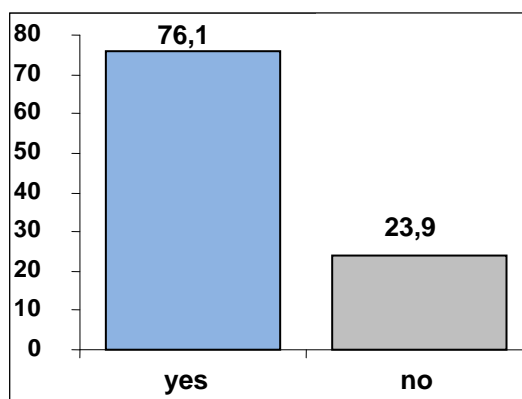


Chart 9. Use of argumentation in advertising messages (in percentages)

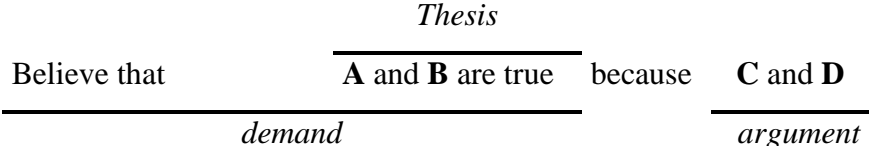
The data obtained prove that advertisements which use some form of argumentation by far prevail – they constitute more than 3/4 of all messages. It should not be surprising since

the main objective of advertising is to persuade and argumentation delivers the necessary measures. Another thing is that it is possible to persuade without argumentation clearly applied – it is evidenced by advertising messages of the early stage of development of this field. For instance, a significant part of the interwar period advertisements was of a more informative and less persuasive character. The purchase depended more on the needs of potential customers rather than the producer or distributor's efforts. The pre-war, almost ascetic advertisement of one of Warsaw cinemas can serve as an example here (Illustration 3).



Illustration 3. Pre-war cinema advertisement

If the argumentation was used, then it was necessary to determine whether it was of a merit based or non-merit based nature. This aspect requires a brief introduction. The process of reasoning can be depicted as follows:



Schema 1. Process of argumentation

The assertions marked with letters C and D in the Schema 1 were classified long ago. Nowadays, we can distinguish dozens of different types of arguments, generally known for their Latin names. In this context, it is important to differentiate between merit based and non-merit based arguments (Table 2).

Table 2. Definitions of merit based and non-merit based arguments

<b>merit based arguments</b>	<b>non-merit based arguments</b>
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They show a correlation with the thesis of the argumentation, prove the thesis. In other words, they relate to the core, the essence or merits of the case. Efforts should be made to use only such arguments.	They do not show any correlation with the thesis of the argumentation, refer to other matters, circumstances and aspects. They do not relate to the merits, the heart of the matter. The use of such arguments should be avoided. Using them is justified only if it is not possible to use factual arguments.
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Advertising messages can also be examined from the point of view of the relevance of arguments used. The analysis produced the following results (Chart 10).

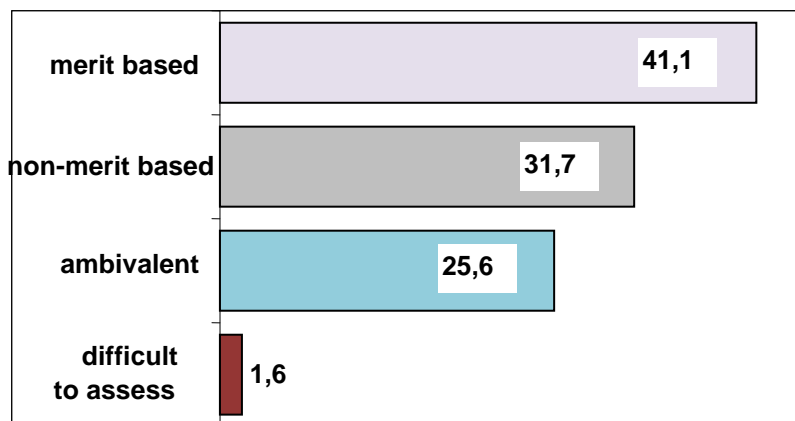


Chart 10. Factualness of argumentation (in percentages)

The studied messages are dominated by merit-based arguments. Yet, non-merit based arguments constitute only a little less than one-third of the total number. Additionally, we also face ambivalent argumentation which is partly factual and partly non-factual, where different aspects are variously presented from the standpoint of matter-of-factness. It is an important issue as it means that, to a large extent, advertising convinces us regardless of the nature of products, services or their usefulness.

What follows are examples of messages differing in this respect. Non-factualness of argumentation was used in the advertisement of the Plus network (Illustration 4) with reference to the elements of a series of popular films, whose hero is James Bond. Most of the text in the message is vague and does not concern the essence of the offer. Meanwhile, the text of the message advertising the offer of a cash loan (Illustration 5) is devoted entirely to its advantages.





Illustration 4. Advertisement of Plus

**DOBRA POŻYCZKA GOTÓWKOWA** Od 9 lat jesteśmy sprawdzonym Partnerem biznesowym!

**DLA MAŁYCH I ŚREDNICH FIRM**

TYLKO **2,99%** ROCZNIE\*

Zainwestuj w rozwój:

- ✓ Preferencyjne warunki dla Przedsiębiorców
- ✓ Bez weryfikacji w BIK, ZUS i US
- ✓ Pod konsolidację, okres spłaty nawet do 30 lat
- ✓ Akceptujemy wszystkie źródła dochodu - również z zagranicy
- ✓ Pożyczki od 25 do 500 tys. złotych

**Przykładowa tabela rat na okres do 30 lat\***

25 tys. zł	rata 155,27 zł
75 tys. zł	rata 465,80 zł
150 tys. zł	rata 931,60 zł
300 tys. zł	rata 1863,19 zł

[www.dobrapozyczka.com.pl](http://www.dobrapozyczka.com.pl) Infolinia dla firm: 608 921 608\*\*

Nasi Doradcy czekają w 35 oddziałach w całej Polsce - zadzwoń:		ŁÓDŹ		SIERADZ	
BIALYSTOK 85 6537060	KATOWICE I 32 7826060	ŁÓDŹ 42 6319370	SIERADZ 43 8225303	ŚLĄPSK 59 8485305	
BIELSKO BIAŁA 33 8164346	KATOWICE II 32 2000434	NOWY SĄCZ 18 4145353	SZCZECIN 91 3594053	ŚWIDNICA 74 8519763	
BYDGOSZCZ 52 3455123	KIELCE 41 3434711	OPOLE 77 4022005	TARNÓW 14 6277175	WARSZAWA I 22 4203340	
BYTOM 32 7876109	KRAKÓW I 12 4331035	PŁOCK 24 2623229	WARSZAWA II 22 4360546	WROCLAW 71 3428718	
CZĘSTOCHOWA 34 3611475	KRAKÓW II 12 4261081	POZNAŃ 61 8352234	ZAMOŚĆ 84 6392720		
GDĄSK 58 3074316	KROSNO 13 4251343	RADOM 48 3623123			
GLIWICE 32 2315611	LUBIN w/Wrocławia 76 8443302	RZESZÓW 17 8621320			
KALISZ 62 7671009	LUBLIN 81 5323237	SIEDLCE 25 6440307			

Składowa rata stanowi ofertę bankową w rozumieniu kodeksu cywilnego. \*\*RBSF dla przyjętych zarobków wynosi 7,00%. \*\*\*koszt połączenia wg. stawki operatora

Illustration 5. Advertisement of the company Dobra Pożyczka

It should be added that the factualness of the message, including advertising messages, does not necessarily mean that it is true.

Another issue worth discussing is the use of specific types of arguments. It should be noted that the classification of arguments has not been created for the purpose of advertising. The spheres of application were initially different: politics, judiciary or scientific and philosophical discourse. Hence, it is not always easy to interpret advertising messages in these

categories. However, in most cases this can be done. The results are shown in Chart 11. Please note that percentages do not necessarily add up to a hundred as some messages may contain more arguments than one.

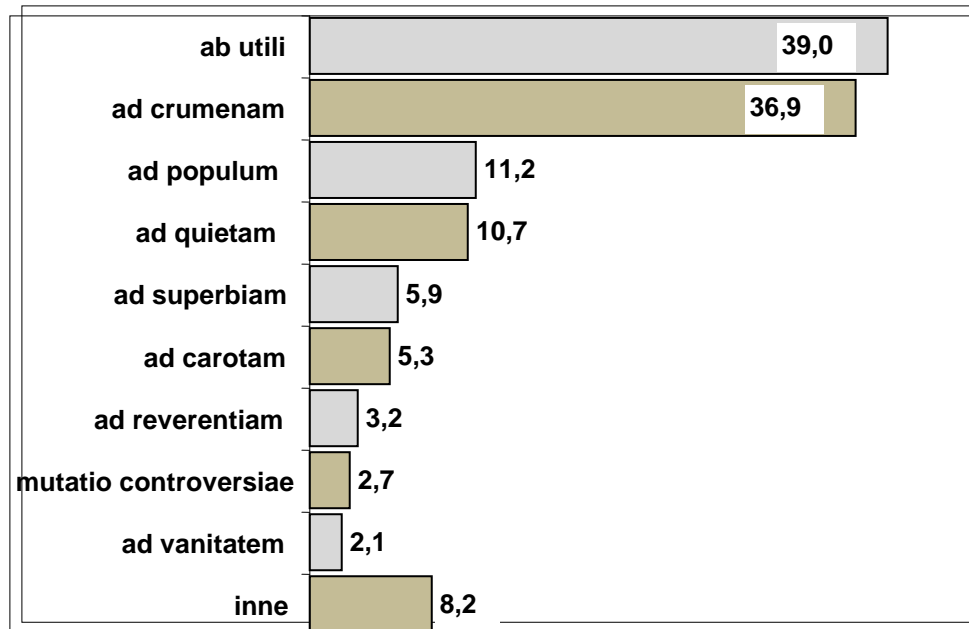


Chart 11. Types of arguments (in percentages)

The frequency distribution of arguments used in advertising can be commented on as follows. First, the dominant pair of arguments of a similar frequency appears – *ab utili* (refers to utility) and *ad crumenam* (refers to a pouch – financial gains). These arguments were used in nearly 40 per cent of messages. The subsequent pair of arguments equivalent as to the frequency of use was: *ad populum* (to humans) and *ad quietam* (to peace, to quietness) – more than 10 per cent each. The rest had a much narrower application.

At this point, it is worth pointing out the specificity of application of the first two arguments in advertising, where there are important differences. In the public sphere, *ab utili* often refers to the usefulness to the public – society, social group, etc. whereas in commercial advertising, emphasising one’s own benefits and the good of the individual are dominant. The argument *ad crumenam*, understood broadly, means both material profits and losses, primarily financial. However, in commercial advertising, it relates only to profits and advantages as advertisements do not raise the issue of disadvantages of the offer.

For the purpose of the analysis, nearly 50 different types of arguments were taken into

consideration<sup>11</sup>; however, approximately one-fourth of this number of arguments was used in advertising messages. Therefore, it can be concluded that advertising does not use a varied set of arguments. Furthermore, if we add that the use of *ab utili* and *ad crumenam* in advertising is fairly obvious due to the subject of interest and the purpose of this sphere, it turns out that the variety of arguments applied is significantly limited.

Finally, it is worth looking at persuasion techniques and arguments in a slightly different manner. So far, the number of advertisements was the percentage basis. Considering the fact that more arguments and persuasion techniques could be used in a single advertising message, it is also possible to count the percentage share, assuming that the total number of each of these persuasive measures is the percentage basis. It enables to determine what their potential neighbourhood in advertising messages looks like. In advertising messages were used the following:

- 247 arguments in total (not to be confused with the total number of analysed advertisements),
- 123 persuasion techniques,
- 80 arguments and persuasion techniques altogether in the same message.

The obtained proportions are presented in percentages in Table 3.

Table 3. Coexistence of arguments and persuasion techniques

<p><b>67.6 per cent</b> of arguments found in advertisements were used without persuasion techniques</p>	<p>Arguments and persuasion techniques together constituted <b>32.4 per cent</b> of all the arguments used and <b>65.0 per cent</b> of the total number of persuasion techniques</p>	<p><b>35.0 per cent</b> of persuasion techniques found in advertisements were used without identifiable arguments</p>
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The situation can be described more or less as follows: the number of arguments used exceeded twice the number of persuasion techniques. Meanwhile, cases where these measures were used together accounted for one-third of all the techniques and two-thirds of the arguments.

### Conclusions

- Argumentation used in advertising messages is only slightly varied. It is probably mainly

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<sup>11</sup> Only these arguments whose application in advertising messages could be expected were taken into account.

due to the fact that the communication process in advertising is of a simpler nature and does not require using a rich set of eristic measures. Two kinds of arguments are most commonly used – *ab utili* and *ad crumenam*, i.e. those that are obvious in advertising.

- Although merit-based arguments prevail, a relatively high percentage of non-merit based arguments in advertising can and should raise concern. This implies that advertisers do not always treat recipients seriously. Convincing about the offer without talking about its features is not the most desirable type of market communication.

- The large share of the persuasion technique ‘unusual message’ leads to two reflections. Firstly, the very nature of this technique makes it a better tool for using non-merit based arguments. This fact only further reinforces the concerns expressed. Secondly, the excessive exploitation of this technique works to the detriment of its effectiveness since it requires using even more aggressive means as the ones already in use become less effective.<sup>12</sup>

- The set of identified persuasion techniques is fairly rich; however, a high concentration in the range of particular techniques application results in considerable monotony as far as the realisation of creative ideas is concerned.

The issue of persuasion techniques and arguments used in commercial advertising has only been little explored – as opposed to political advertising, especially in the context of their joint occurrence. Meanwhile, it is an important trend of mass communication that shapes not only our market and consumer behaviour, but also the system of values and conduct. Therefore, it deserves a more thorough analysis and study not only in the press, but in other media as well.

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<sup>12</sup> It is particularly clearly exemplified by erotic motifs. Until relatively recently, advertisements portrayed only eroticism (allusions, references to sex). Nowadays, there are forms of advertising which simply show people having sex.